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SUBJECT: APRIL 20 MFA PRESS BRIEFING: IRANIAN NUCLEAR  
ISSUE, GUANTANAMO BAY, DETAINED JOURNALISTS, SIX-PARTY  
TALKS, RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, SCO, ECONOMIC ESPIONAGE, SPANISH  
TRIAL, ORGAN TRANSPLANTS, SOLOMON ISLANDS, SAARC

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#### Summary

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11. Key points made at the April 20 MFA press briefing  
are as follows:

- China encourages the EU-3 and Iran to promptly resume talks in Moscow in order to promote a peaceful resolution to the Iranian nuclear issue.
- The United States should consider the interests of the international community in dealing with the Chinese citizens held in Guantanamo Bay, in addition to supporting China's counterterrorism efforts.
- The MFA Spokesperson declined to answer questions on the detention of both Singapore Straits Times reporter Ching Cheong and New York Times researcher Zhao Yan.
- The Six-Party Talks participants have already reached a consensus outlined in the Joint Statement, which they should implement promptly.
- Overseas organizations should recognize that the Chinese Government protects its citizens' freedom of religion.
- Military cooperation within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) framework serves to maintain regional peace and stability.
- China is not involved in economic espionage in Canada and is concerned over such "groundless and irresponsible accusations."
- The lawsuit filed by Tibetan organizations against several Chinese leaders in a Spanish court is a "complete farce."
- The British Transplantation Society's disregard for the facts in its recent report on China's organ transplant practices is "puzzling."
- The Chinese Government has launched an emergency

response mechanism to aid the PRC citizens and ethnic Chinese who were victimized in the recent Solomon Islands riots.

- The decision to grant China observer status in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) will usher in a new chapter in China-South Asia relations. End Summary.

#### Iranian Nuclear Issue

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¶2. During his recent visit to Iran, Assistant Foreign Minister Cui Tiankai conveyed to Iranian officials China's concern over the situation regarding its nuclear program and called for a display of restraint and flexibility in order to negotiate a resolution to the issue, MFA Spokesperson Qin Gang stated during the regular April 20 MFA press briefing. AFM Cui and Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov, while meeting in Moscow, agreed to enhance communication regarding the Iranian nuclear issue and promote a diplomatic resolution. AFM Cui expressed support for Russia's position. During the April 18 meeting of P-5 and German officials, he expressed China's concern over recent developments and the hope that the parties will exercise restraint and flexibility to achieve a diplomatic resolution. Qin stressed that there is still room for a peaceful resolution to the Iranian nuclear issue, calling on the international community not to abandon diplomatic efforts. China encourages the EU-3 and Iran to resume talks in Moscow promptly in order to gradually expand mutual trust and promote a peaceful settlement.

Chinese at Guantanamo Bay

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¶3. Asked by the AP correspondent about the recent Supreme Court decision regarding the PRC nationals being held at the U.S. military facility in Guantanamo Bay, Qin asserted that the United States should consider the interests of the international community in dealing with the Chinese citizens detained in Guantanamo Bay. East Turkestan forces are a component of international terrorism. The international community, including the United States, has been harmed by terrorist organizations and should support China's counterterrorism efforts, according to Qin.

#### Detained Journalists' Cases

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¶4. Qin declined to answer questions on the detention of both Singapore Straits Times reporter Ching Cheong and New York Times researcher Zhao Yan. Pressed by reporters, he maintained that China's judicial authorities will handle these cases according to the law.

#### Six-Party Talks

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¶5. Questioned whether the territorial dispute between Japan and South Korea has contributed to the delay in the Six-Party Talks, Qin said that Beijing hopes the two countries can resolve their dispute through negotiation. The interests of all Six Parties will be served by promoting the Six-Party Talks and the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. The parties have already reached a consensus outlined in the Joint Statement, which they should implement swiftly, Qin stressed.

## Detention of Christian Leaders

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¶6. Responding to the Bloomberg correspondent's inquiry into the U.S.-based China Aid Association's report that over 1,300 unofficial church leaders were detained in 2005, Qin said that he had not seen the report but argued that the Chinese Government protects its citizens' freedom of belief in accordance with the law. The President of the China Christian Council recently briefed the press on the development of Christianity in China. Overseas organizations should take an objective view of religious freedom in China, Qin remarked.

## Upcoming SCO Meetings

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¶7. Asked about the upcoming Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) defense and foreign ministers' meetings and whether they will discuss joint military exercises, Qin noted that in addition to the June SCO Summit in Shanghai, a defense ministers' meeting will be in held in late April in Beijing and a foreign ministers' meeting will occur at a later time, which he did not specify. China hopes these exchanges will enhance dialogue and coordination among member states, helping maintain regional peace, stability and security. Qin offered no information on specific plans for SCO joint military exercises but stated that military cooperation within the SCO framework helps maintain regional peace and stability.

## Chinese Espionage in Canada

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¶8. Responding to the Xinhua correspondent's inquiry into reported comments by a Canadian official that China was conducting high-tech espionage activities in Canada, Qin argued that China is not involved in economic espionage in Canada and is concerned over such "groundless and irresponsible accusations."

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Beijing hopes Ottawa can distinguish between true and false accounts and make more efforts to support the healthy development of bilateral ties, he said.

## Spanish Court Hearing on Chinese Leaders

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¶9. Asked by the Spanish News Agency correspondent about a high-level Spanish court's decision to try a case filed by a Tibetan organization against several Chinese leaders, Qin asserted that the lawsuit is a "complete farce." The Spanish court handling the case should possess a common knowledge of judicial affairs, he said. China-Spain relations are developing smoothly, Qin remarked, while warning that "unpleasant" matters should not be allowed to undermine bilateral ties.

## Criticism of Organ Transplant Practices

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¶10. In response to the AFP correspondent's question about the British Transplantation Society's reported criticism over China's organ transplant practices, Qin said that the recently issued Ministry of Health regulations address these concerns. He remarked that he was "puzzled" by the British report's disregard for the facts. This organization should remember that several years ago some doctors at British hospitals removed patients' organs without properly informing patients' relatives, Qin asserted.

## Beijing Aids Chinese Victims of Solomon Islands Riots

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¶11. In his opening remarks, Qin highlighted that the Chinese Government is extremely concerned about the welfare of PRC citizens and ethnic Chinese who were targeted in recent riots in Honiara. Premier Wen Jiabao instructed the MFA to monitor the situation closely and ensure the safety of overseas Chinese in the Solomon Islands, prompting the MFA to activate its emergency response mechanism. While Beijing and Honiara lack diplomatic ties, the Chinese Government urged the Solomon Islands Government through various channels to adopt measures to halt the looting of businesses owned by PRC nationals and overseas Chinese. Beijing requested that Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea provide assistance to Chinese citizens victimized during the riots. The PRC Embassy in Papua New Guinea has dispatched diplomatic staff to the Solomon Islands to make contact with the local Chinese community and urge Solomon Islands officials to ensure the safety of resident Chinese. The PRC diplomats have also helped local Chinese seek police protection. In addition, China has appealed for assistance from the International Committee of the Red Cross.

## China to Attend SAARC Summit as Observer

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¶12. Noting that China was recently accepted as an observer at the 2007 South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Summit, Qin said that Beijing hopes the relevant procedures will be completed quickly. China becoming a SAARC observer will usher in a new chapter in China-South Asia relations. Beijing is willing to work with South Asian nations to promote regional peace and stability and explore cooperation in many fields.

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